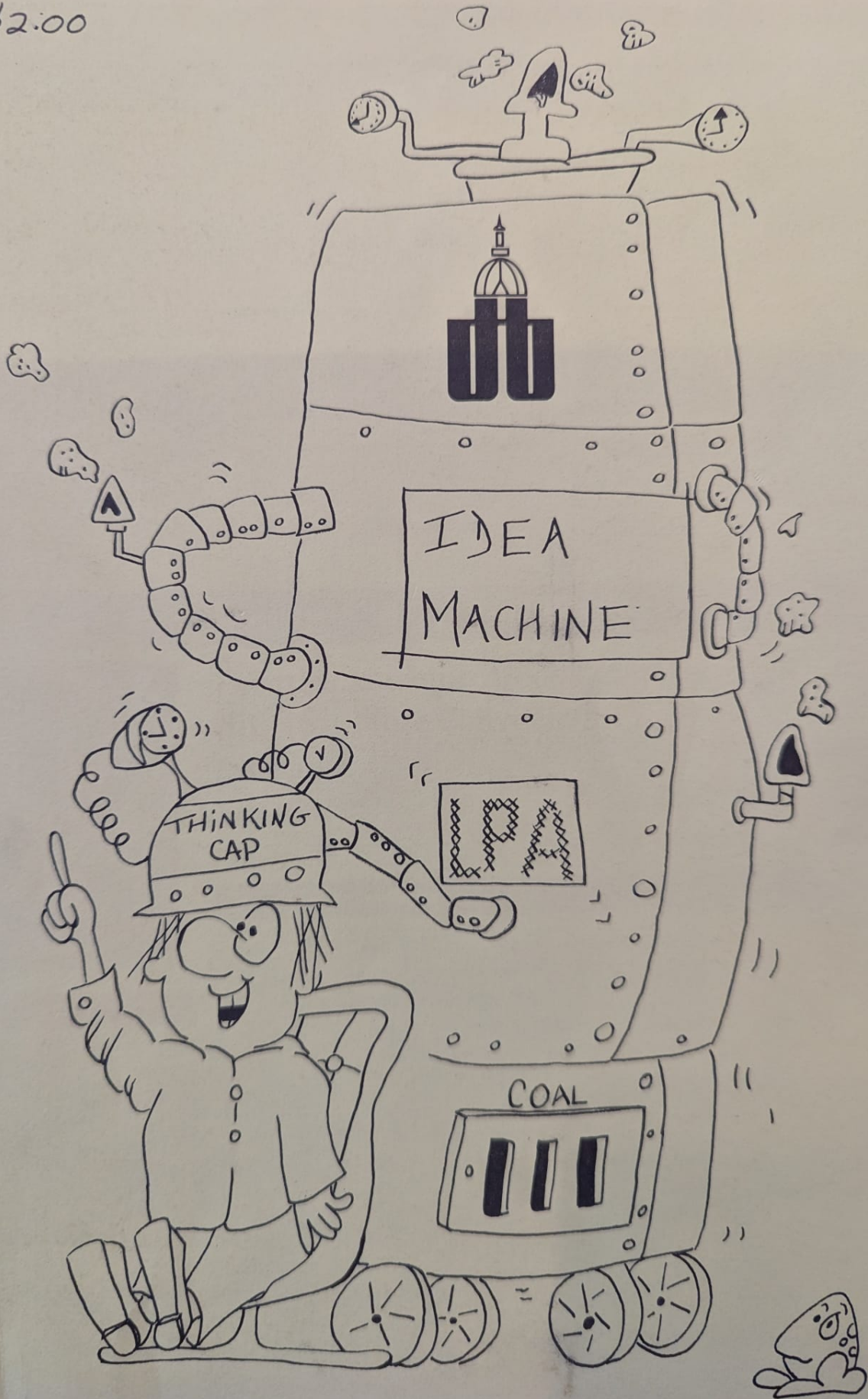


\$2.00



The Idea Machine

**A booklet of handy hints
for more convenient living by everyone**

created by

**Mary O'Donnell, RPT
Rehabilitative Medicine
The Johns Hopkins Hospital
Baltimore, Maryland 21206**

sponsored by



The Little People of America Foundation



LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA, INC.

FOUNDER-BILLY BARTY

"Think Big"

It has been a pure delight to have had the privilege of editing this booklet; a publication created not only by the unselfish dedication and labor of Mrs. Mary O'Donnell, but also by the hundreds of persons who so cleverly, so ingeniously and so generously contributed ideas to its creation.

THE IDEA MACHINE is an excellent collection of handy hints for everyday living. The Little People of America, Inc., through the LPA Foundation, is proud to have had the opportunity to underwrite the cost of this informative booklet.

We hope that many, many little people, as well as others, may find numerous convenience ideas in the booklet. We express our deepest appreciation and respect to Mrs. O'Donnell for her efforts, along with continued thanks to all of those persons associated with the Johns Hopkins Hospital who work with and in the behalf of little people everywhere.

Gerald L. Rasa
National President
The Little People of America, Inc.

INTRODUCTION:

Short stature has long been of medical interest. The reasons why children have growth problems are many. They include heredity, diet, infection, hormonal imbalance and a host of other factors.

The daily activity of short statured people is full of predicaments. Often their heads reach the counter tops. Their arms fall short of faucets, shelves, coin slots and switches. There are many situations which call for ingenuity on behalf of the short statured person. This booklet will present some suggestions for adjusting physical obstacles. The objective is also to provide assistance to parents, teachers and other professionals involved with the short statured person.

INDEX

- I. Home Management and Housing
- II. Tasks of Daily Living
- III. Avocations
- IV. Recreation and School
- V. Transport and Travel
- VI. Public Buildings
- VII. Employment

I. Home Management and Housing

A. Work Simplification

1. Conserve your energy:

- a) Shop catalogues, newspapers and the yellow pages.
- b) Slide, don't lift objects (i.e. slide pans from the stove and around counters). Objects can be put on a wheeled serving cart to eliminate carrying loads. A collapsible grocery cart can help carry laundry as well as groceries.
- c) Tilt pitchers; don't pick up to pour. For example, place a cup in the sink and tilt the pitcher from sink's edge to fill the cup.
- d) Lazy Susan trays and shelving that slide out organizes cabinets so that the back of the cabinet is accessible. Revolving trays can also be used on counter tops and in bathrooms. Rubbermaid manufactures these items.
- e) Schedule marketing so that you don't try too much at one time.
- f) Electric appliances will conserve effort (i.e. mixers and can openers).
- g) Do you dry clothes on a line? Use a pulley or rotating line to allow you to stand in one place while hanging up and pulling down the clothes.
- h) Consider employing a neighborhood adolescent for some household jobs.

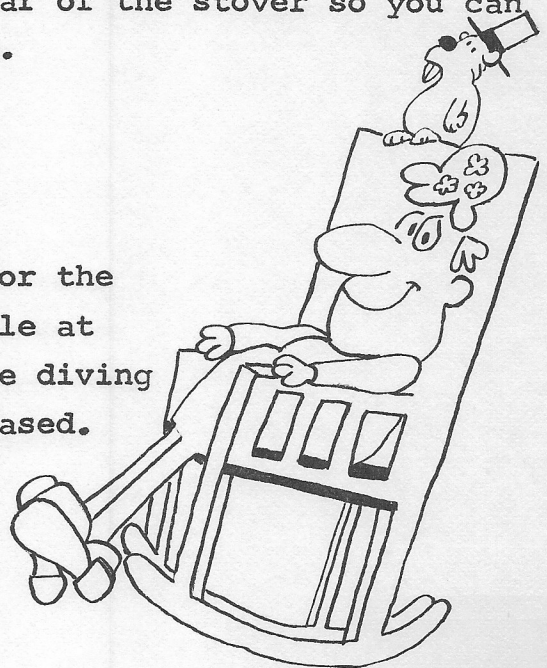
2. Good working conditions

- a) Know what height is comfortable for you to work.
 - 1) Store regularly used items and heavy items at that comfortable height or lower.
 - 2) Little-used items store higher and out of the way.

- 3) Hooks can be added to the top of a broom handle and in the closets for storage at convenient heights.
- 4) Peg-boards can be used on an open wall space. Frequently-used items can be hung on them.
- b) Extra extension aids and stools kept at your job eliminate the need to carry them back and forth.
- c) Appliances should be simple to operate with controls at a convenient height. Inquire at the suppliers for mobile homes for reduced sizes.
- d) Sit down whenever possible for activities such as doing ironing, dishes or preparing dinner. A bar stool will allow sitting high in order to reach the countertop or work counter. An adjustable ironing board can be lowered. You can then sit on a chair to iron at a comfortable height. (1)
- e) You may find a front loading washer and dryer very manageable.
- f) What's cooking? To see into the pots, angle a mirror in the rear of the stove so you can look into the pots.



Defogging sprays for the mirror are available at sports stores where diving equipment is purchased.



- g. With extra metal tubing attachments for your canister vacuum cleaner, you can reach the top of your curtains and hard-to-get-at places. (1)

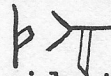
B. Furniture

1. Chairs that are low-to-the-ground include:
 - a) barrel rockers
 - b) bean bag chairs and
 - c) wooden chairs that can be cut down
2. A bunk bed or a twin bed with link or sagless springs, rather than box springs, will lower the bed closer to the floor. It is easier to get in and out of the lower bed.

C. When building or remodeling, you can obtain carefully thought-out specifications recommended by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Some ideas follow.

1. Individual suites should be level throughout.
2. Kitchen
 - a) Work surfaces should be less than or equal to elbow height.
 - b) Oven controls should be in the front. The top of the oven height should be less than or equal to eye level.
 - c) Mount the controls for the vent hoods and the lights on the counter top.
 - d) Sink bowls should be less than or equal to 5" in depth.
 - e) The bottom of wall cabinets should be eye level over the work surface of the base cabinet except for cabinets over a cooking surface, an oven and a refrigerator.

- f) All shelving in the pantry and the wall cabinets should be adjustable.
 - g) The sink faucets should be a single-lever type.
 - h) The refrigerator should be self-defrosting, have a freezer on the side, have foot controls and have adjustable pull-out racks.
3. All the doors should be swung out or slid by a single effort.
4. Closets
- a) Pole height should be within easy reach about 3" to 6" above the head.
 - b) Shelves should be at eye level or lower. The shelves can be placed behind the pole.
5. Bathroom
- a) A long-handled single-lever water control should be used.
 - b) The towel racks should be less than or equal to shoulder height.
 - c) For reduced sink and tub sizes, try mobile home suppliers.
6. Light switches could have extenders. Extra chain can be added to a pull-type switch. Other light switch extenders follow.
- a) Nail a metal plate bent in the shape of a Y on the top of a dowel rod.



One side turns on and off light switches while the other side can be used for pushing buttons.

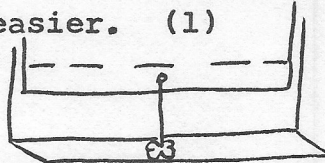
- b) Drill a hole in the plastic part of the light switch.



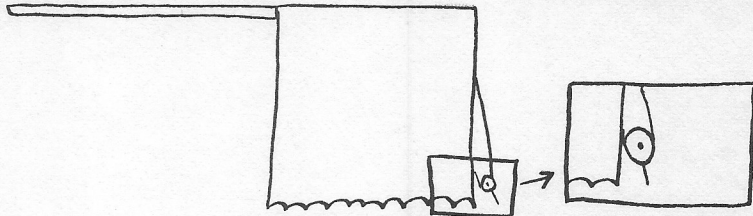
Attach metal ring to hole. Attach a wooden dowel rod to the metal ring.

- c) An extended light switch is manufactured by Patterson Switch Company (P.O. 477, Dept. K1, Warrensburg, Missouri, 64093). The switch is functionally lowered 18". It's clear plastic so as to not interrupt a room's interior design.

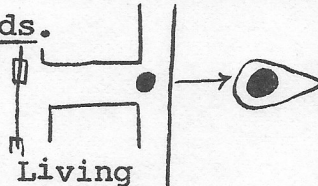
7. A cord or decorative shade pull enables a shade to be reached easier. (1)



8. Draperies should have cords ample enough to reach or tie together and attach to a pulley. It can be hidden neatly behind the curtains' edge. (1)



9. When a door knob needs an extra extension, adaptors can turn a knob into a lever for opening. These are available through Help Yourself Aids.



II. Basic Tasks of Daily Living

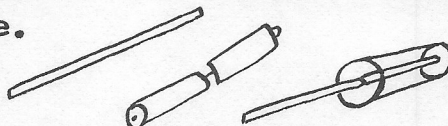
A. Toilet aids

1. Do you need a long handled cleaning device or toilet paper holder?

- a)* The back of a long handled plastic or wooden spoon with a clothing pin attached (glued to the back) can be used to hold toilet paper.



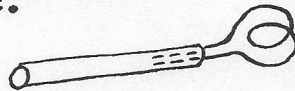
- b)* You can use a wooden (or plastic) dowel rod with a sponge curler glued over the end. Toilet paper can be wrapped around and torn off after use.



- c)* A 3 cornered "dish" sponge can be used as in b. These are commercially available.

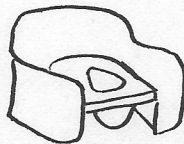


- d) A paper holder can be constructed with a sturdy but flexible wire. Bend the wire as shown. Set the wire in aluminum tubing purchased from a hardware store. The grip can be covered over with tape or baby doll plastic.



- e) Commercial toilet paper holders are marketed by Help Yourself Aids.

2. Little boys can be trained to substitute a paper cup for a urinal.
3. Small potty chairs that are free standing or fit over the toilet can be used at home for training until the child feels and is safe using the larger toilet.



* Wooden and sponge devices need regular cleaning and cannot be cleaned well. They are porous and become dirty. Cleaning with bleach or strong cleaners will disintegrate the sponge after a relatively few cleanings.

B. Shower Aids

1. Shower extensions that fit standard outlets (either by suction or pipe fittings) can bring the spray to you. Commercially available shower massagers can be mounted lower in the stall or closer to the tub.
2. Long handled sponges can be used to soap your back or clean out the hard-to-reach areas of the tub and walls. (1)



3. A terry cloth robe helps dry hard-to-hit spots.
4. An inflatable pillow for the bath tub can keep your head above water. (1)

C. Grooming

1. Hair

- a) Rattail brushes and combs can extend reach. The rattail handle can be further extended by drilling a hole in one end of a piece of flat wood and a hole in the handle of the comb or brush. These two pieces are joined by a bolt, nut, and lock washer.



- b) A curling iron can simplify curling your hair.



Likewise, the self sticking curlers make the task less of a chore.



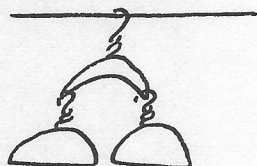
c) Mirrors

- 1) A lighted make up mirror can be placed at a convenient height.
- 2) Hang a long mirror on the back of a door. Otherwise, you could lower one that is on a wall for easier viewing.

2. Care of clothes - hang ups

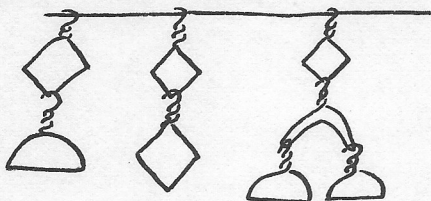
a) hangar arrangements (1)

1.) pyramid

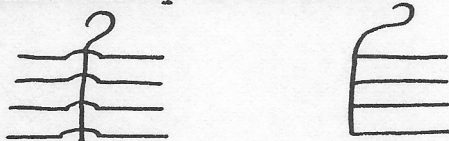


Put tape around the hangar junctions so they won't slip.

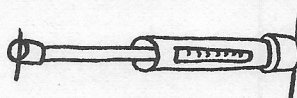
2.) bend metal hangers



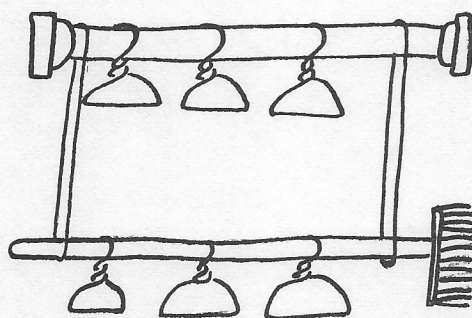
b) Tier racks for blouses and slacks are commercially available.



3. Spring loaded adjustable closet rods are commercially available. Place them low enough to provide easy reach.



4. Lower a closet pole with permanent adjustments or add another pole to double your hanging space. (1)



permanent rod

wire or strong rope

broom(temporarily)

pipe

or rod

D. Reachers and utility sticks

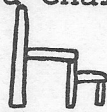
1. There are a number of commercially available reachers that are hinged or spring loaded. Your small grocery store owner could probably tell you where to purchase some grab-all grocery tongs.



2. Kitchen or barbeque tongs can be used to extend your grasp. (1)



3. A short utility ladder or a stool can be used to put a person closer to a shelf. It is useful in the bathroom and kitchen to reach faucets or to climb on toilet and chairs. A library stool moves easily on rollers but locks in place when weight is placed on it. It is commercially available at office supply shops. One family remodeled a chair in the following manner.



This is a chair with a built in foot rest or a 2 step stool. Step stools that are similar in design are commercially available. A Cosco kitchen stool with a ladder and seat is one such commercially available item. A small step ladder with nonskid rubber feet and a pillow on top makes a handy chair or stool.

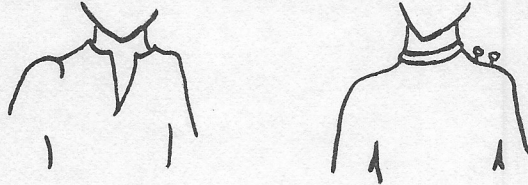


4. A wooden stick (dowel rod) with a screw hook can be made at home. (1) It comes in handy for pulling on pants, socks and shoes, for zippering boots and for reaching light switches and elevator buttons. There is a loop of cloth at one end for an easier hold.



E. Dressing

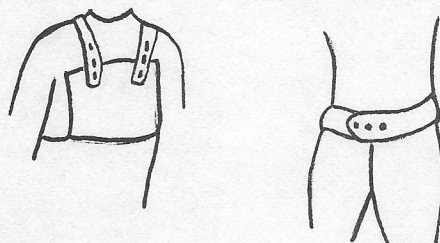
1. Front or near front openings of blouses, bras and dresses are convenient when dressing.
2. Expandable necks (knits), snaps on the shoulder and V-necks allow for a larger neck opening for the head to slip through a garment. (2)



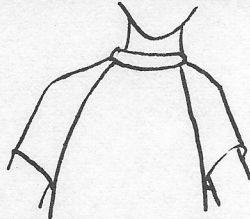
3. When having your clothes made, you could have a tailor or seamstress that you use regularly. Cloth patterns can be made and are durable. If you make your own, stretch and sew patterns and techniques are useful.

When shopping for ready made clothes, inquire about the store's alteration services.

4. An elasticized waist on the pants avoids buttons, zippers, fasteners and fitting problems. Be sure to check the amount of elasticity: too much may be uncomfortable. To decrease the elasticity and still retain the shape cut the elastic to half it's width or replace it with thinner elastic. Another alteration would be to remove the elastic from just the front of the garment. Mrs. Wendy Ricker, a Little Peoples' Association member, writes (1-13-76) "the ideal is a zipper in front with gentle elastic in back. Avoid side or back zippers especially in skirts or pants. Learning to alter pattern instructions from installation of a side zipper to a fly zipper was great help!" You can "add belt loops and a belt for waistline adjustments." Buckled or buttoned adjustable straps and waist bands allow garments to be lengthened or widened. (2)



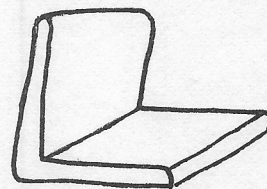
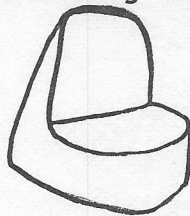
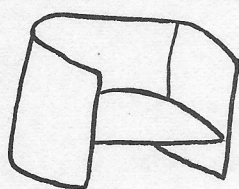
5. Raglan sleeves give more room through shoulders and armhole. They disguise the shoulder line and flatter any sized shoulders. (2)



6. When teaching children to dress themselves, start with larger sizes in a particular item.
7. Loafers and elastic shoe laces allow shoes to be slipped on and off. Shoes and sneakers which lace from the toes to the arch will expand to fit a high instep comfortably.
8. Velcro can be used in place of buttons and snaps. This would allow easier manipulation of garments.
9. Do your glasses keep sliding down? A plastic nose bridge can be obtained for custom fit. Ask for it.

F. Dining

1. A booster seat, a Cosco "go seat", or bar stool allows one to sit at a higher level.
2. A seat ordered from replacement sets for durable chairs can be attractively used on top of a regular chair. A cloth covering is less slippery.



G. Public Facilities

1. When faucets are too hard to reach, you should have some disposable pre-moistened towelettes for washing your hands. In the bathroom, the towlettes can be stored in a handy spot.
2. A wooden wedge can be used to secure a swinging door (i.e. swinging rest room doors). A high handled swinging door can be made easier to open by tying a rope around or through the handle. The loop of rope will be at a convenient height to pull open the door. (1)

3. A stool or sturdy brief case (used as a stool) would help reach a water fountain, a vending machine or a high public telephone where one at a lowered level is not available.

III. Avocation

A. Working around the house

1. Organize your tools.
 - a) Have frequently-used items close to the site of use. The less-frequently-used items should be separated and put out of the way.
 - b) Use peg boards to store items at a comfortable height.
2. Stabilize your tools with C-clamp or vice when you are working.
3. Choose your tools carefully.
 - a) Use sharp knives to decrease your effort.
 - b) Use non-slip grips.
 - c) Tools made of light-weight material are easier for you to handle.
 - d) Wooden handles can be shaped or cut down for manageability (i.e., rakes and shovels).
4. Use a work bench or a stool to sit while performing tasks.
5. Lawn mowers could have hand controls and a twist rather than pull start. (1)

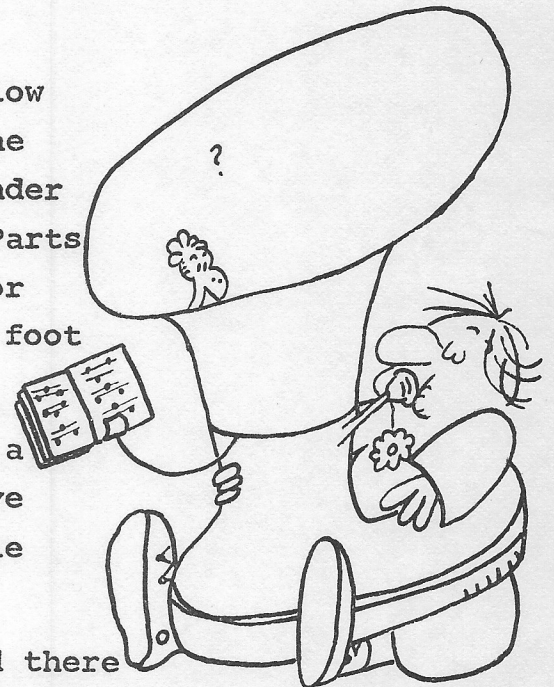
B. Sewing machine control

1. Place the control on a stool or an overturned basket and operate the control with one foot. (1)
2. Operate the control with one hand while sewing with the other.
3. Some machines have a knee lever control. A knee control allows you to rest your feet on a stool while sewing. (1) A foot control can be taped to the leg of the sewing machine and used as a knee lever control.

- C. Electrical scissors can make cutting material easier.

IV. Recreation and School Activities

- A. Children should be encouraged to play most kinds of sports. The program should be geared to the individual to make it a rewarding experience. They should be able to experience success and learn to work in and with the team. That might mean realizing a child's limited tolerance for running and letting the child pace himself. It means searching for the appropriate sized equipment (i.e., baseball bat or bike) or cutting equipment down to a manageable size (e.g. hockey stick). People should avoid contact sports and trampolines.
- B. Toys and books should be stored where the child can reach them. A low drawer which pulls out level can be utilized. (2)
- C. Pedal extensions on pianos and organs are usually needed.
- D. Desks in the school should allow for a child's feet to touch the floor. A stool can be used under a high desk as a foot rest. Parts of the desk such as the side or front bars could be used as a foot rest.
- E. Arrangements can be made with a friend or the cafeteria to have food selection at a comfortable height.
- F. If your child is at school and there are problems or misunderstandings, seek immediate solutions. Know your school laws. If there are problems, make sure that the resolution of the problem is documented.

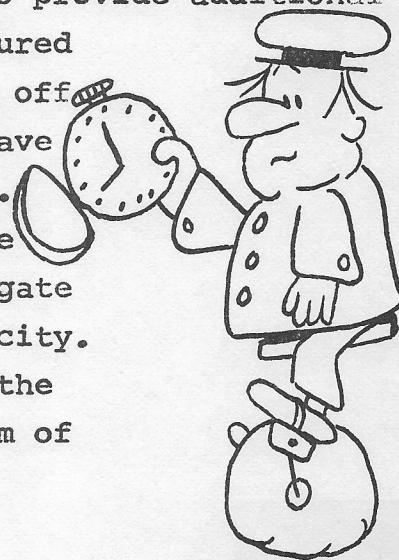


V. Transport and Travel

A. Hand controls or driving extensions are usually needed for the gas and the brakes. A car manufacturer or local mechanic can assist you with this. A platform could be installed and secured to the floor of the car to allow feet to rest while driving.

B. Check your state and city transit authority for regulations concerning the mass transit and parking for disabled people. P. J. Wysocki writes (9-30-74) "The following items could be of benefit to short statured people:

- " 1. The State of Washington provides a system of overtime parking permits for disabled individuals. This system allows a permit holder to park for unlimited periods of time in parking meters... otherwise restricted. Some short statured individuals qualify for this permit.
- " 2. The City of Seattle offers a 20 percent deduction in taxi fares of disabled individuals who have difficulty using public transit busses.
- " 3. METRO, which is our (Seattle) public transit system, has just ordered five busses for use by the handicapped. These busses will have lifts and other special features. In addition, the other 600 busses will also provide additional features to assist short statured individuals in getting on and off the bus." Similar programs have been developed in many cities. Most short statured people are eligible. You should investigate whether you have one in your city.
- " 4. In addition, METROis in the process of developing a system of reduced fares for low income handicapped people."



VI. Public Buildings

- A. If you are involved with construction, check the city ordinances for code requirements centered around either the handicapped or those with mobility restrictions.
- B. The designs in the special types of ordinances which are of benefit to short statured persons, in particular, are:
 - 1. lower elevator buttons
 - 2. easier opening doors
 - 3. lower stair steps
 - 4. handrails for stairs
 - 5. lower telephones
 - 6. lower mirrors and other fixtures in toilet and rooms and
 - 7. lower drinking fountains

VII. Equal Opportunity in Employment

- A. Know your city and state "Fair Employment Practices Ordinances."
- B. Know the limits of the law. Your state senators and representatives involved with making the laws can help.
- C. Discrimination should be reported and prosecution considered.
- D. Some short statured people are eligible for vocational rehabilitation. Application is usually made through your physician.

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The National Fund for Research
1967, Vincent House, Vincent Square, London.

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Mrs. Betsy Trombino

Short Statured Symposium Participants, June, 1977

Special thanks goes to Mrs. Elizabeth Stover for her typing skills.

RECOMMENDED READING

Access for All. 1977, Illustrated handbook of barrier free designs, 190 pg. Ohio Governmental Committee on Employment for the Handicapped, Columbus, Ohio 43215. (\$2.75)

Accent on Living. Hand and foot controls for vans and ramps. Cheever, P.O. 700, Gillum Road, Bloomington, Illinois, 61701.

ILLUSTRATION IDEAS

From Richard Meyers' cartoons.

Manufacturers of Assistive Devices (catalogues can be obtained from these addresses).

Brookstone Hard-to-find tools
127 Vose Farm Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire 03458
(603) 924-7181

Independence Factory
P.O. 597
Middletown, Ohio 45042
(inexpensive, variable quality)

Help Yourself Aids
Box 15
Brookfield, Illinois 60513
(Mail order catalog No. 100)

Mr. Mel Rossi
P. O. Box 1405
Resida, California 91335
(California residents only)

When regular department stores or catalogue supply does not carry what you need, try the addresses above. When a specialized item is not found, consult your local drug store, medical supply company or physical medicine department of your hospital for further catalogue information.

CLOTHING

Handiduds
Eleanor D. Short
Drawer 198
Hayerford, Pa. 19041

SHOE STORES

Made to Order:
Lee Kee
Boat and Shoe Maker, Ltd.
65, Peking Road
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Ready Made for Women:
Cinderella of Boston
9 West Street
Boston, Massachusetts, 02111

If enough interest is expressed, suppliments to this booklet could be drawn up. The suppliment would be a place to submit and share with others your practical aids and ideas. It would be a place to show the latest developments, such as, "a new reacher soon to be marketed" reported by Fran Silverstein, OTR, Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore.

Nominal fees might be required for the paper work and mailing. If you are interested, please write:

Mary L. O'Donnell, RPT
Rehabilitation Medicine
The Johns Hopkins Hospital
600 N. Wolfe Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21205

When you write, please include the practical aids and ideas that you want to share.

